

Avery County Board of Education

Work Session 5:00 pm

November 9, 2021

In attendance: Dr. Dan Brigman, Mrs. Pat Edwards, Mrs. Jane Bumgarner, Mrs. Kathey Aldridge, Ms. Ruth Shirley (joined in by speaker phone), Mr. Dennis Brown, Mrs. Tiffany Moon, Mrs. Cindy Brigman, Mr. Jeff Jaynes

Mrs. Kathey Aldridge called the work session to order. (Motion to approve: Pat Edwards, second: Jane Bumgarner, Unanimous)

The work session began with a presentation by Mrs. Tiffany Moon, the Avery County Community Health Coordinator from Western Youth Network. Her presentation was centered on the Avery County School District student survey summary data. A couple of our schools (one middle school and the high school) were selected to fill out the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey earlier in the school year. The survey asked students about their health behaviors. The survey was designed to protect the student's privacy, so they feel freedom to give truthful answers. No student names are mentioned in the reports or results. The results of the survey are to be used help current students in our schools and to help those in the future. Mrs. Moon broke the data down and showed our students results on bar graphs for easy comparison. She told the board members that the trends found in our district's data was consistent with data all over the country at this time. After the completion of the presentation, Mrs. Moon let the board know that the Western Youth Network had funds to help Avery finically if we decide to use the data presented to do a health campaign in our schools. The WYN was willing to provide training for staff and to help write grants that will support our youth and healthy lifestyles. There was a group discussion with Mrs. Moon and the board members about different ideas that would support healthy youth in Avery County. Some suggestions were as follows: 1) Working with Oasis (helping and nurturing healthy high school relationships, as well as focusing on the prevention of unhealthy relationships middle schools;) 2) Implementing a health class (different from a PE class); 3) Implement the Catch My Breath Program; 4) Character Education Programs, 5) AMY Wellness Grant for additional funding. The board decided to ponder on the information and revisit it soon.

This spring, the N.C. General Assembly implemented a mandatory training for everyone who teaches young readers. Pre-K and elementary teachers are required to complete a literacy program called LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling.) The program takes roughly 160 hours of professional development spread over two years. Ms. Whitney Vance has been working very hard to find ways to help teachers be successful and complete this lengthy required training. One way to help the teachers with the requirement was to find ways to build in some time to specifically work on these requirements. A calendar revision which was proposed to the board to support future LETRS training. Dr. Brigman invited Mr. Jeff Jaynes to present the proposed calendar revision which would start with the next semester (2022.) The draft calendar Mr. Jaynes presented had some built-in early release days and required workdays which would give the teachers time to work on meeting this state requirement. Mr. Jaynes also proposed a draft calendar for the 2022/2023 school year which included early dismissals specifically for teachers to have time to complete this required. The board members had discussions about the calendars and decided to come back to this item in the December meeting.

Avery County Board of Education

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2021

The Board of Education will hold its regular monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 9th, 2021 at Avery County Schools Central Services.

CALL TO ORDER Mr. John Greene called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm. The following Board members were in attendance: Mr. John Greene, Mrs. Pat Edwards, Mrs. Jane Bumgarner, Mrs. Kathey Aldridge, and Ms. Ruth Shirley joined the meeting by speaker phone.

ETHICS STATEMENT

“Board members are reminded that it is our duty to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest as we handle the work of this Board. Does any member of the Board know of any conflict of interest or any appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before us at this meeting? If so, please state them for the record. If, during the course of the meeting, you become aware of an actual or apparent conflict of interest, please bring the matter to the attention of the chair. It will then be your duty to abstain from participating in discussion on the matter and from voting on the matter.”

INVOCATION Mr. Jeff Jaynes gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Approval of November 9th, Open and Closed Agendas (action) (motion to approve; Kathey Aldridge second: Pat Edwards; Unanimous)

Approval of August 31st, 2021 Open and Closed Minutes (action) Requested they be tabled until they can be discussed further.

Approval of September 28th, 2021 Open and Closed Minutes (action) (motion to approve; Jane Bumgarner: second: Kathey Aldridge; Unanimous)

Approval of October 12th, 2021 Open and Closed Minutes (action) (motion to approve; Kathey Aldridge: second: Pat Edwards; Unanimous)

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Brigman began his report by letting everyone know he had attended the ribbon cutting ceremony at our new behavioral health hospital here in Avery County. Appalachian Behavioral Health Hospital will open its doors on November 15th to provide top level treatment and provide a environment to promote healing. He said that we are very blessed to have this facility in our county. Veterans Day is coming up soon. Dr. Brigman encouraged everyone to take time to remember how blessed we are to be here in America. He requested that everyone reach out to those who served and those that are currently serving in our military to show your appreciation. He stated that God has, and He continues to bless America. Dr. Brigman ended his report by going over some upcoming school calendar dates. He mentioned Thanksgiving Break and Christmas Break approaching soon.

UP FRONT SESSION

- A) Recognition of the Avery County Principal of the Year- Dr. Jamie Johnson
- B) Recognition of our EC Educator of Excellence - Ms. Drema Morris
- C) Recognition of the Avery County High School Wrestling Team

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- 1- Mr. Dustin Trice – Mr. Trice wanted to show continued support for masks to be optional and requested that the

board always remain transparent, especially when its decisions that directly affect his children.

2-Ms. Kathleen Watson- Ms. Watson thanked the board members also for masks remaining optional and wanted the board to know she was involved in a fundraising event to help support the Avery High Band.

3-Ms. Keri Teague – Ms. Teague thanked the board for the optional mask mandate, and she stated that the kids are very happy now. She also expression her opinion about other matters she felt needed to be addressed.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

A) Globally Competitive Students

- 1) Field Trips (action) (motion to Approve: Kathey Aldridge; second Pat Edwards, Unanimous)
 - a) State Cross Country Meet -Women's Team; Ivy M. Redmon Sports Complex, Kernersville, NC Nov. 5th & 6th (information)
 - b) High School Basketball (Girls and Boys) Tournament; Cherokee High School, Cherokee, NC Dec. 28th - 30th, 2021
 - c) Newton-Conover High School Wrestling Tournament; Newton, NC, Dec. 10th & 11th, 2021
 - d) Bojangles Arena Wrestling Tournament; Charlotte, NC, Dec. 31st, 2021 & Jan. 1st, 2022
 - e) Virginia High School Wrestling Tournament, Bristol, VA Jan. 14th & 15th, 2022
 - f) Greensboro Coliseum Wrestling Tournament, Greensboro, NC Feb. 17th - 19th, 2022

In the previous board meeting, the board members requested that Newland Elementary School field trip request number 430 (to Charleston, SC) and field trip request number 443 (Raleigh, NC) provide a few more details. They requested a copy of both trips cancellation policies and they requested to see updated chaperone lists. Dr. Samuelson provided this information, as requested, to in the board as an insert in their board meeting binders. Dr. Brigman thanked Dr. Samuelson for providing this important information.

- 2) Important Dates:
 - a) November 11th-Veterans Day Holiday- No School
 - b) November 24th-Annual Leave Day-No School
 - c) November 25th & 26th-Thanksgiving Holidays -No School

B) 21st Century Systems

- 1) Return to Learn Update (action) (motion to approve; Pat Edwards second: Kathey Aldridge; Unanimous)

Dr. Brigman reminded everyone that every month in accordance with the NC General Statute 2021-130 the board must take action on current COVID protocols, specifically the use of face coverings being optional or required. He recommended that the board continue with the current policy of face coverings being recommended but optional for all students and staff in the school system. Buses will still have to follow the federal law that requires the drivers and students to wear face coverings. Mrs. Edwards made a motion we leave the current policy in place. Mrs. Aldridge seconded the motion. All of the board was in favor of this decision.
- 2) Policies for 1st Reading (information)
 - a) 1310/4002-Parental Involvement
 - b) 1510/4200/7270 School Safety
 - c) 1720/4030/7235 Title IX Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex
 - d) 2125/7315 Confidential Information
 - e) 3100 Curriculum Development

3) Policies for 2nd Reading (action) (motion to approve: Jane Bumgarner; second: Kathey Aldridge; Unanimous)

- a) 3640/5130 – Student Voter Registration and Preregistration
- b) 6120 – Student Health Services
- c) 7232 - Discrimination and Harassment in the Workplace
- d) 8341 – Limited Claim Settlement

4) Honor Grad System-Ricky Ward

Mr. Ward approached the board to provide information to them on why he thinks it would be good for the High School transition from the Class Rank System (Salutatorian and Valedictorian) to the Honor Grad System (similar to the Latin Honor system used in colleges.) He provided a scale for GPA that would qualify a student as a Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and a Summa Cum Laude. The Cum Laude scale of GPAs 3.5 through 3.99 would match the BETA (Honors) program already being implemented at the high school. Mr. Ward mentioned the GPA numbers could be adjusted if needed. Students would wear hoods at graduation that would signify their level in the system. He would like to switch to this for the following reasons: 1) More students get honored 2) Rank can hurt students getting Scholarships and hurt them emotionally 3) Focus less on competition and more on achievement. He proposed, if approved, we begin this new system with this year's sophomores. He would have a meeting with the sophomore parents to let them know of the change and go over the class options. Instead of a valedictorian and a salutatorian giving speeches the class president and vice president would fill those roles. Mr. Ward has discussed this with some parents and has mentioned it to the school improvement team. He also mentioned other school districts around us are using it. He gave the examples of Watauga and Yancey counties. The board members are going to further discuss it. This agenda item will be revisited at the December board meeting.

5) 2021-2022 Budget Amendment #2 - Jeff Jaynes (action) (motion to approve: Pat Edwards; second: Jane Bumgarner; Unanimous)

Mr. Jaynes reviewed the second budget amendment with the board members. This budget amendment will add 3.9 million to the total budget. Majority of this money is coming from Federal COVID funds. It will affect four out of six of the funds including: State Public School Fund, Local Current Expense Fund, Federal Grants, and Restricted Local Funds. The first fund he discussed was the \$471 added to the State and Public School fund. Out of the \$471 dollars, \$386 was for additional PEP Supplies (masks, gloves, shields, etc.) and the remaining \$85 was from earned interest from our State School Tech Fund. The second fund adjusted will be with the Local Current Expense fund. An adjustment will be made due to a salary change made because of a staff change. This will increase the budget a little over twenty-seven thousand dollars. The third change, also the biggest change, is the 3.9 million added to the Federal Grants funds. Majority of this money is with the ESSER III fund. Capital Outlay fund does not change. Adjustments internally to make sure nothing is in the red at this moment. The county manager called and asked if we could pull some High School allotted funds from Capital Outlay and move forward with furniture that needs to be purchased instead of waiting until the end of the construction project. The county will provide the money to take care of other needs the high school has in return. Mr. Jaynes wanted it documented that this was discussed and approved.

Lastly, we received additional donations since the last board meeting which can be seen in the Restricted Local fund. He also needed to make one correction. While working with Whitney Vance on the Green House project funds, he realized he accidentally budgeted \$13,000 too much. He wanted to make that known. The \$13,000 reduction is not lost money, he made a mistake.

With this approval, the total budget will be changed from 31 million to almost 35 million.

6) Construction Change Orders- Jeff Jaynes (action) (motion to approve everything except CO # 71; Kathey Aldridge; second: Pat Edwards; Unanimous)

Mr. Jaynes had five change orders to present sent the last board meeting. The total of these change orders is right at \$30,000. Mr. Jaynes went through them one at a time. The first change order (COR #070: POD 300) is for additional steel angel iron braces that needed added to the wall and steel girders for structural integrity. Change Request #072 for \$1,621.50 was the cost for additional bollards at the gas meters as requested by the Building Inspector and the Fire Marshal. Bollards were not in the original plan. The next

change order #073 is for additional electrical work. The original plan called for a solid fireproof roof above a drop ceiling. Once everything was coming out of the building, they realized it wasn't possible to do a solid firewall. Instead, they must make a firewall ceiling. The total cost of this change order is \$21,502.36. COR#074 calls for a neutral to be added into the existing electrical panelboard in the mezzanine area of POD 300. This additional neutral conductor will bring the electrical panel up to code. The cost of this change order totals \$2,423.27.

Lastly, Mr. Jaynes went over change order COR#071 which he felt was a very unfair request. The dishwasher in Prep 222 does not have a power connection indicated to it on the contract documents so it is not presently operating. This cost will make the dishwasher operational. The contractor slid the dishwasher into the Prep Room and didn't hook it up because there was nowhere to plug it in. They just left it and never took the time to get electricity to it. The entire board agreed that we shouldn't pay for this change order.

The board approved all change order requests except COR # 071.

The Board will meet in Closed Session for the purpose of discussing information that is privileged, confidential or not a public record as Per N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1) students and personnel; and (a)(6) initial employment. (action) (motion to approve: Kathey Aldridge; second: Pat Edwards; Unanimous)

CONSENT AGENDA (action) (motion to approve; Kathey Aldridge; second: Jane Bumgarner; Unanimous)

- 1) Employment
- 2) Contracts/Retirements/Resignations/Terminations/Information
- 3) Student Transfer Requests
- 4) Student Release Requests

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

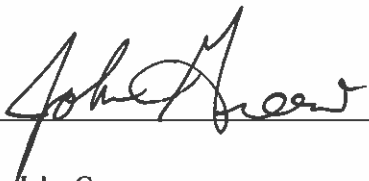
Mr. Greene recognized Dr. Brigman as a veteran who served our country proudly through the Navy. He thanked him for serving our country.

Mr. Greene, along with the board, recognized Jeff Jaynes for all the service to Avery County Schools. His impact has been tremendous, and he will be missed as he retires.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- 1) Mr. Jaynes said that the large red A that goes in front of the new high school will be installed on Saturday by the contractor.
- 2) Kathryn Ezzelle, Band Director, sent the board members a folder with information on band needs and band expenses. The board looked through this information and will work with Mr. Jaynes to get them some financial help.
- 3) Dr. Brigman mentioned that other systems are providing employee bonuses. The board requested that Dr. Brigman come up with suggestions pertaining to how employee bonuses could be distributed.

ADJOURNMENT (action) (motion to approve; Kathey Aldridge; second: Jane Bumgarner; Unanimous)


Chair, John Greene


Secretary, Dr. Dan Brigman

Respectfully submitted:



Hannah Arnett

Motion to Approve: Pat Edwards

Member Seconded: Ruth Shirley

Date Approved: 12-13-21